

INTERIOR OF THE NEW HALL, LINCOLN'S-INN.*



ROOMS FOR LARGE ASSEMBLIES.

"THE Manchester Athenæum Soirée" is now recognised as one of the most brilliant gatherings of literary talent annually recurring in England, and around the galaxy of intelligence there to be found, are assembled, thousands of charmed auditors, and would be thousands more, if covered space could be found to contain them. The intention of the writer is not to give a description of the meeting of 23rd ultimo, that duty will be well performed by other hands, but some remarks on the defects of the building, admirable as the Free Trade Hall is in many respects, will

* See p. 521.

not be out of place in THE BUILDER. It has long been a common remark, that the doorways of rooms of extraordinary dimensions are rarely proportionate in size or number; still the defect is as great as ever in many of our newest buildings, although it is found an intolerable grievance on such occasions as that which calls for these observations. Here was an elegantly dressed throng, a majority of the fair sex, and in all amounting to three thousand five hundred, to be passed through one entrance door, with the exception of three or four hundred, consisting of stewards, ladies, and invited guests, who entered at the other end of the building. The pressing was unavoidably great, so too must have been the derangement of attire; and the time occupied

extremely inconvenient, as there was not time for the vast assemblage to settle in their places completely before the opening of the intellectual treat; and had all the tickets been properly scrutinized by the receivers, a very considerable number would not have been within the walls at the appointed hour. No doubt, many are deterred from attending large meetings by their dislike to such a prelude, and as there is no absolute necessity for the continuance of such a mistake, we recommend architects to apply their minds to this point, feeling a strong conviction that large meetings of various descriptions will increase in number, and that the time required for admission and departure are considerations of growing importance.

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